

Membership drive during November

From the President

The Socorro County Chamber of Commerce is entering into a very exciting and challenging time in history. We are in the process of a total reorganization in cooperation with the City of Socorro. We now have two full-time directors physically located at the chamber office, a Visitors and Tourism Director and an Economic Development Director.

In line with these changes, we are creating three new committees in an effort to reach out to the community. The first is an Economic Development Committee. The second will be a Cultural Affairs Committee and the third is a Membership Committee.

During the whole month of November we'll be carrying out a membership drive. We feel it is important that the board members interact more regularly with the business community and at the same time, find out from you what you feel is the direction the chamber should be going and what you see are any changes that we should consider.

If anyone is interested in serving on any one of these committees, please contact the chamber at 505 835 0424.

We look forward to visiting with you in the near future.

Michael Olguin

New directors will promote "Shop Socorro"

From the Economic Development Director

As many of you may have already heard, the chamber has undergone some recent restructuring.

The City of Socorro has taken over much of the local event and tourism planning, while the chamber will focus on supporting local businesses and developing business opportunities.

Deborah Dean was hired by the city as the new tourism director, while I will report to the chamber as the new economic development director.

Both of us will be working out of the Chamber of Commerce offices and we will be working closely on some common goals. LaVern Robinson and Sally Haigler will continue to work in the tourist center.

Before starting with the chamber I set out a strategic plan, and to produce this newsletter was one of my first objectives. I hope to supply you with important information about upcoming grants, training programs and incentives on a regular basis.

Already, Vernon Cox, of the NM State Economic Development

Department has been down to Socorro to talk to me about many of the opportunities available to us through his office.

I also intend to get out and promote Socorro to businesses wishing to move to Socorro and to people who are considering relocating, and I'll be targeting specific industries where a need has been identified. One need that has been identified has been good housing, and with the help of the chamber's new Economic Development Committee, I hope to find ways to attract developers to the area.

It's not all about expansion however. Socorro may not be fully ready to handle too much growth, so we'll be focusing on retaining and strengthening our existing businesses as well.

Deborah Dean and I are working on two projects. The first is a meeting schedule to bring together the local arts community. To eventually have a permanent location for the arts will not only create better income for a number of locals, but it will add another point of interest for visitors to Socorro.

The second project we are planning is the "Shop Socorro" campaign.

Residents who shop locally can save their receipts and we will trade each dollar spent for an auction dollar that can be used at a fun auction at the end of the month.

Supporting local business owners is going to become more important after Wal*Mart opens.

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New Members

Bureau of Land Management
Wal*Mart
City of Socorro
Bhasker Medical Ass.
Bhasker Farms

Officers & Board of Directors 2004-2005

Officers
Michael Olguin, President
Mary Gillard, Treasurer
Pepita Ridgeway - Economic Development Director
Deborah Dean - Tourism Director

Board of Directors
Bill Lorang
Pauline Jaramillo
Barbara MacLeod
René Steensma
Bill Piccinini
Denise Shrum
Linda Ritter
Bill Blough
Ronna Kalish
Rick Aster
JoAnna Aguilar - DeBrine
Richard Torres

Staff
LaVern Robinson, Executive Secretary
Sally Haigler

Also in this edition

- Shop Socorro details
- November Calendar
- Women's Business Grant
- Historical Grant
- A SWOT Analysis of Socorro County



Would you like to sponsor this space? Mailed to 190 Socorro Chamber members. Call 505 835 0424 for to book this space for December. Also ask about monthly newsletter inserts.

If we can get everyone to think more locally for goods and services, we may be able to save some jobs in town.

Business owners will have to do their part too, and there are plans in place to have regular meetings for local businesses where discussions will be held on ways to cope with the changes. One meeting set for Thursday last week was cancelled due to the storms. It was obvious that people were not focused on Wal*Mart at that time.

Over the next few months we'll also be trying to establish a better relationship with New Mexico Tech, so we can act on any new developments at an early stage.

We'll also be conducting a survey with our members to identify more opportunities and challenges in Socorro's business community.

I am always interested in any suggestions, feedback or information about economic development that you may feel is important, so please feel free to contact me at any time.

Pepita Ridgeway

Register as a vendor with state and federal government

René Saenz, of the New Mexico Procurement Assistance Program, recommends local businesses register as vendors with the state and federal governments.

Saenz held a procurement workshop at Socorro City Hall recently and plans to hold the workshops on a regular basis.

There are several state and federal agencies in Socorro that can only purchase goods and services from registered vendors.

The cost of registering with the state is five dollars, but Saenz recommends paying the \$75 registration fee to receive statewide bids by e-mail.

Registering with the federal government and the military is free, but it is a fairly complicated process.

Saenz provided information on how to register and gave a workbook and forms to the Socorro County Chamber of Commerce for anyone who is interested. Saenz, who is based out of Silver City can be contacted at 505 538 6835, or call Pepita at the Chamber of Commerce to look at the package and copy registration forms.

"Shop Socorro"

During the month of November we are encouraging Socorroans to shop local and support local businesses people. Many Socorro retailers are feeling unsure about their future with the onset of Wal*Mart. In an effort to keep some of the Christmas shopping dollars in Socorro, bring local receipts, for any goods or services, into the Chamber of Commerce, and exchange each dollar spent for auction play money. In early December, at a location TBA, we will hold

an auction with goods donated by the local retailers that have been patronized, including local restaurants.

We would like to ask any local retailers, restaurants, accommodations to donate items for our "Shop Socorro" auction, to be held in early December. People who have exchanged local receipts for auction dollars will use their money to purchase Christmas items, gifts, services. Hopefully, by promoting "Shop Socorro" we will be educating the public to spend dollars locally and support local business.

Women's project seeks requests

The Women's Cottage Industries Project is accepting grant applications. The project is designed to help women produce and sell handmade crafts as simple as rag rugs or as complex as a new computer software program, or projects as intense as catering for community events. Grants typically range from \$200 to \$2000. The groups' goal, according to a news release, is to help establish guilds, or groups of women in rural areas of the state that can begin to sustain themselves creatively, productively and financially.

The project is supported by the New Mexico Women's Foundation.

Groups, including emerging grassroots or organizations, located in New Mexico that help women participate in or

develop cottage industries can apply for the grants. Groups must consist of three or more women and have some type of governing body. Letters of inquiry are due at NWWF, 551 Cordova Road #411, Santa Fe, NM 87805, no later than Nov. 15.

More detailed information is available at www.nmwf.org.

Grants for architectural preservation and archeology

The New Mexico State Historic Preservation Division is preparing to issue RFPs for small grants to carry out preservation-related projects using federal funds.

The RFP was issued in early October and draft proposals will be due at HPD on or before 5 p.m. Monday November 8, 2004. For more details contact HPD or Pepita Ridgeway at the Socorro County Chamber of Commerce.

Socorro declared disaster area

Gov. Bill Richardson has told the state Department of Finance and Administration to provide up to \$750,000 in emergency money to be divided between Socorro and Chaves Counties after hail caused extensive damage in Socorro County Oct. 5. Chaves County suffered severe flood damage

Be seen by Socorro's business community.
Sponsor this space for the December Newsletter.
Call the chamber at 505 835 0424 for more information.

Calendar of Events November 2004

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Oct 30 American Association of University Women Fall Workshop NMT	1	2 Election Day	3 -Rotary Good Sam's 12 Noon - Socorro Arts Show. Nov 3 - Dec 30. Macey.	4 - Civitan Val Verde 6 p.m. - Lions Rancher's 7 p.m.	5 Fort Craig 150th Anniversary Brenda 835 0412	6 -Fort Craig 150th -Perla Batalla Performing Arts Series - Macey -Artists Reception 5-7p.m. Macey - Adobe Elements Socorro Library Book at 835 4659
7 Fort Craig 150th Anniversary	8	9 Socorro Chamber Board Meeting 5:30 p.m.	10 -Rotary -Good Sam's 12 Noon -Harp and Flute Duo and Pot Luck Club Macey 835 5050	11 - Civitan Val Verde 6 p.m. - Lions Rancher's 7 p.m.	12	13 -25th Annual Mineral Symposium Virgil Lueth 835 5140 - Adobe Elements Socorro Library Book at 835 4659
14 25th Annual Mineral Symposium	15	16	17	18	19	20
Bosque del Apache Festival of the Cranes - 835 2077						
			Rotary Good Sam's 12 Noon	- Civitan - Lions	Holiday Crafts Fair - Garcia Opera House. LaVern 835 0424	
Bosque del Apache Festival of the Cranes - 835 2077	22 Presidential Chamber Music Series Macey Center	23 Turkey Trivia Club Macey 835 5050	24 Rotary Good Sam's 12 Noon	25 Thanksgiving Day	26	27 - Christmas Candy Electric Light Parade 835 0424 -Balloon Rally
28 -Balloon Rally	29	30	Look for our "Shop Socorro" Auction in early December and remember to keep your local receipts.	Dec. 2 Business After Hours "Corner Copy" 607 Hghwy 60 West. 835 0424		

Sponsor this popular space under the events calendar.

Call the Chamber at 505 835 0424 for more information.



Socorro County Chamber of Commerce • P.O. Box 743,
Socorro, NM. 87801 • 505 835 0424 • www.socorro-

November Newsletter



A Socorro County SWOT Analysis

From Fall 2003 through Spring 2004, four independent researchers visited more than 250 individuals in 46 rural areas throughout New Mexico. The researchers used a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis. The goal was not to gather factual data, but to work with each area's residents to help them identify their perceptions of where they are right now. The data was published in *Voices of Rural New Mexico* and is used by the NM Rural Development Response Council to help identify how we can best allocate our resources in the future.

Socorro's Strengths:

Community Amenities - Friendly community with rich history, spectacular events, good infrastructure, recreation and family centers.

Education: Good public school system, New Mexico Tech, National Radio Astronomy Observatory, EMRTC, and Earthquake Testing Center.

Business: Agricultural products, variety of locally owned business.

Recreation: Two nearby wildlife refuges, golf course, extensive youth activities and clubs, movie theater.

Health Care: Mental Health Center, Parent child Health Center, Health Coalition, Public Health Office.

Infrastructure: Fire Academy, State Police Station, Safe Ride Government.

Transportation: Interstate Highway and railroad.

Weaknesses

Social Problems: High teen pregnancy rate, substance abuse, many youth are at risk.

Employment: Not enough quality jobs.

Housing: Lack of housing and lodging.

Appearance: Community could be more attractive.

Economics: Limited leadership commitment to economic development

Technology: Lack of computer force more traditional means of communication.

Opportunities

Tourism: Add lodging and restaurants; capitalize on community events.

Growth: Add conference center, industrial park tenants, create artists cooperative.

Social Services: Strengthen substance abuse task force.

Retail: Wal*Mart to open 2005

Threats

Property Values: Could decrease unless development occurs.

Social Problems: Drug traffic via interstate, high teen pregnancy rate.

Transportation: Lack of available public transportation.

Employment: Lack of job opportunities.

Retail: Wal*Mart may discourage smaller businesses.

The results of this analysis do not necessarily reflect the views of the Socorro County Chamber of Commerce.